

**Volume II
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QUOTABLE

Books are men of higher stature, the only men that speak aloud for future times to hear.

— E.S. Barrett

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Mea culpa

Everybody makes mistakes. That's why pencils come with erasers. But sometimes, the pencils shatter to the extent the eraser is unusable — and that's what happened with last month's **LEARN Alive!** Production difficulties forced a series of delays throughout July, precluding publication (a cardinal sin). The problems have been rectified — note that the newsletter will now publish the 16th of each month, without fail. Meanwhile, please accept my earnest apology for the delay. Sometimes, you just can't take me anywhere.

- Martin Jones Westlin, publisher

LEARN Alive!



LEARN and McDonald's are lovin' it as Literacy Day nears

By MARTIN JONES WESTLIN, Editor/publisher, LEARN Alive!

The yellow guy to your immediate right needs no introduction, but LEARN would just as soon go ahead with one anyhow. That's just the way LEARN is, after all — persistent, committed and determined to give credit where credit is due. At the moment, the props are reserved for McDonald's Corporation, and its world-famous figurehead, as the planet's largest fast-food chain gears up to participate in LEARN's Literacy Day activities, set for Saturday, Sept. 8, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Ronald will be on hand to endorse LEARN's effort; refreshment will be provided by McDonald's, and the music and comedy come courtesy of The Jackstraws, a fixture at many San Diego tourist venues.

English and Spanish recitations of children's stories are on tap, and the world's largest crossword puzzle (or so LEARN says) promises to stun and amaze (or so LEARN thinks).

On the surface, the event is a concession to fun, food and foolery — but beneath it lies a major effort in corporate charity. It ties in with the launch of the corporation's "Readers Are Role Models" literacy campaign, its nod to American literacy tutors

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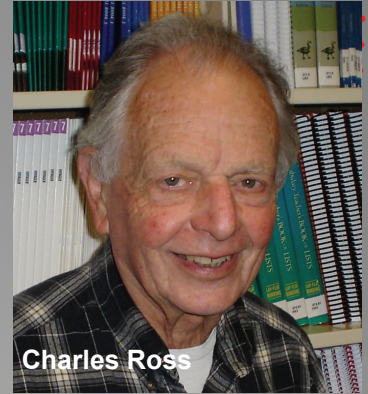


Laubach and LEARN co-chart a course

San Diego County has several centers that specialize in teaching English to foreign-born adults — all because one New Yorker decided to vote a particular way nearly 100 years ago.

That person was Frank Laubach, who lost the presidency of New York's Union Theological Seminary by a single tally — his own, which he cast for the other candidate. Thus free to serve his Congregational Church in other capacities, he would travel to the Philippines in 1915, working as a missionary out of the seminary's Manila affiliate. From there, he would devise a system of reading and writing for the Maranaro tribesmen. And literacy education would never be the same.

Charles Ross, East County director of the Laubach Literacy Council of San Diego, says that's translated to considerable success amid the council's efforts at English instruction. In the Laubach mold, the council discourages its tutors from conducting the lessons in the learner's native language. "It's more difficult," Ross said, "for people to learn English if it's translated. That's an extra step the brain has to go through." And in East County, that means some fairly intense instruction.



Charles Ross

QUOTABLE

Good children's literature appeals not only to the child in the adult but to the adult in the child.

— Anonymous

"Here is East County," he explained, "we have a huge number of refugees. There are Somalis, people from Afghanistan, from Chechnya, from Iraq, from Iran, from Vietnam, Korea. In East County, [the clients] are 10 percent or less Hispanic, which is not what you'd expect."

Ross said the council often encounters many such students who

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Literacy Day *(from page 1)*

and those involved in reading-aloud programs.

The firm is no stranger to literacy efforts, having launched its own initiatives in several states to benefit communities and its own employees. Additionally, Ronald McDonald House Charities has raised millions to provide safety and education programs for children throughout the world.

"Readers Are Role Models" joins such recent initiatives as the partnership between coffee giant Starbucks and media icon

(See **Literacy Day** on page 4)

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Vista tutor trainings in full swing

The new Vista literacy center liked July's tutor training so much that it's decided to host another one. The parley will be held Saturday, August 18, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the branch, 700 Eucalyptus Ave.; call 760-643-5144 for further information. Please check **LEARN Alive!** for word on subsequent trainings, which are often held midweek over two consecutive evenings — such as the one scheduled Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 12 and 13, from 5:30 to 8 p.m. both days at the El Cajon literacy center, 201 E. Douglas Ave. More information is available at 619-588-3740.

LEARN Alive!

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QUOTABLE

When I look back, I am so impressed again with the life-giving power of literature. If I were a young person today, trying to gain a sense of myself in the world, I would do that again by reading, just as I did when I was young.

— Maya Angelou

LEARN Alive!

Aug.-Sept. 2007

It isn't going to be easy

But International Literacy Day is an admirable start

On Sept. 8, 1966, James Tiberius Kirk plotted his maiden course for the final frontier. The television premiere of *Star Trek* would spawn a cluster of spin-off TV series and films — and television and cinema often compromise the objectives of literacy programs everywhere.

It's ironic, then, that that date also marked the first International Literacy Day, set aside to mobilize global interest and support for literacy activities. Each year, leaders recommit to their hopes for world populations marginalized by their lack of education, including an estimated 860 million adults who can't read and write and 100 million children who lack access to schools.

The event is a product of United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which laid the groundwork in 1946. That year, the organization addressed the world, seeking support for informal education. Twenty years later, the international literacy community formally proclaimed Sept. 8 its watershed date. In 2002, the U.N. adopted a resolution proclaiming 2003 to 2011 as the Literacy Decade. Education for All, an international UNESCO-sponsored literacy campaign, seeks to raise the world's literacy rates 50 percent by the year 2015.

Depending on who you ask, Education for All has its work cut out. Too many literacy programs, it says, have taught reading for its own sake -- learners become discouraged and wonder why they should go on. It is important to link literacy with other development actions, such as health education, running businesses and cultural development. The purpose of learning literacy, Education for All declares, should be clear.

Sept. 8 is not just any ol' Sept. 8

As a public service, **LEARN Alive!** thought it would be totally cool to present this brief list of momentous Sept. 8s. You'll see that International Literacy Day shares a place with some landmark and not-so-landmark events in history. The items are taken from brainyhistory.com.

2003 — Brianna LaHara, a 12-year-old American schoolgirl, is sued for sharing music illegally

1991 — Buffalo Bill Jim Kelly passes for six touchdowns versus the Pittsburgh Steelers (the Bills won, 52-34)

1979 — United States performs nuclear test at its Nevada Test Site

1974 — President Gerald Ford pardons former President Richard Nixon of all federal crimes

1948 — British De Havilland 08 fighter flies faster than sound

1943 — Gen. Dwight Eisenhower announces unconditional surrender of Italy in World War II

1914 — British trader Oceanic sinks off Scotland

1858 — President Lincoln makes his landmark speech about when you can fool people

1585 — First permanent settlement in today's U.S. forms (St. Augustine, Fla.)

1276 — John XXI elected Pope

1024 — Duke Koenraad II is chosen king of Germany

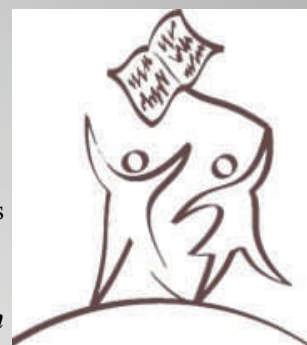
In addition, the organization says, promoting literacy means organizing in different ways for different groups, according to what people need literacy for. Programs must therefore be made more flexible and designed with lots of local input. Standardized programs, it insists, will not do the job.

People learn to read and write best in their own language, the group asserts, before learning to do so in other languages. For many minority languages, the challenge is to produce a usable alphabet and interesting literature.

Finally, it says, there is little point in learning literacy if there is nothing to enjoy reading — if the literate environment is poor in resources. Training writers and encouraging local publishing are just as essential as teaching people to read.

That's where the group's Global Action Plan (GAP) kicks in. This is not an idle document, relegated to the back room as lip service to succeeding generations. Education for All made great strides in the elimination of gender disparities in education as of 2005 (the stated year it had set to achieve the goal), and because of its efforts, nations persistently acknowledge the importance of literacy as the commercial barriers blur the world over. Literacy Day thus has a lot to hang its hat on, even though *Star Trek* was canceled-light years ago.

— *Martin Jones Westlin*



Laubach *(from page 2)*

are illiterate in their native tongues. "For example," he said, "the women from Afghanistan have never been to a school of any sort. They have no idea about study habits or how you learn. That's a very significant part of the difficulty of teaching these people. They have no experience with that, no [reference] from which they can say 'this is how I'm going to learn.'"

Ross, a retired physician, said there are more than 200 Laubach ESL tutors countywide serving a clientele of about three times that number. The international organization has been here since 1961 as an all-volunteer nonprofit — and it's recently forged an association with LEARN in the interest of quality tutor recruitment.

"I think that's been a very positive thing," Ross said, "for two reasons. Even though the LEARN program is relatively new [barely two years old] and Laubach has been here longer, you have credibility as soon as you're part of the library. If I went to a hundred people and asked them 'have you ever heard of the Laubach Literacy Council,' if one had heard, it would be a lot. But if I ask if they've heard of the San Diego County Library, probably 80 percent of them would know that name.

"No. 2, the library has tremendously wonderful outreach in terms of public relations — news releases, that kind of thing. When we run a training, there are a large number of people who are reached, either by bulletins in the library or by press releases to newspapers and magazines. There's been wider knowledge of the fact that we're having a tutor training."

The trainings are held at least quarterly, with the next scheduled for October. For further information, please contact Ross at 619-442-1481 or see www.laubachsandiego.org.

"ESL training is a slow and painful process," Ross said, "because it's a lot more difficult for adults to learn a new language than it is for children." Nonetheless, he said, San Diego County is a better place for the history that unfolded on the heels of that one errant vote.

The money's in hand

A disembodied hand may hold the answer to recent AmeriCorps-based queries on grant-writing experience.

General Mills and Hamburger Helper are funding initiatives to help hometowns across America with monetary grants of up to \$15,000 per project through Sept. 30 and again from Feb. 1 through March 31 of 2008. Funds will be given directly to a public schools or to 501(c)(3) or (c)(4) entities who seek support for libraries and literacy programs. Other uses include:

Lights or bleachers for baseball, soccer or football fields;

Books for school, library or literacy programs;

Playground equipment for parks;

Boys & Girls Clubs programs;

New uniforms for Little League teams;

Red Cross health and safety programs;

Swimming and lifeguard training;

Equipment or supplies for a local food bank; and

YMCA/YWCA tutoring or job training initiatives.

Other eligible entities include social welfare organizations, homeowners and tenants associations, veterans organizations, organizations supported by the government, social and recreational activities organizations, police and fire fighters relief organizations, health care organizations and local associations of employees. Further information is available at:

<http://www.myhometownhelper.com/LearnMore.aspx>



In 1984, the U.S. Postal Service honored Frank Laubach by placing his image on a 30-cent stamp. Laubach, who died in 1970 at age 86, wrote 50 books and scores of articles during his 40 years as a literacy counselor and spearheaded one of the major literacy efforts in the field of education.

Literacy Day

(from page 2)

Oprah Winfrey in the promotion of literacy. The Starbucks Foundation offers grants of \$5,000 to \$20,000 in support of innovative community reading programs.

LEARN seeks to help the estimated 20 percent of San Diego County adults who struggle with reading and writing to achieve their full potential as community members, family members, workers and lifelong learners. It has also embarked on an effort to teach English as a second language to non-English speakers (see the page 2 story on the Laubach council).

Next Month

First and foremost: We do promise to be on time. What happens after that is anybody's guess, except for our coverage of Literacy Day activities and more news on all things LEARN.

